

# NORTH WHATCOM FIRE AND RESCUE

## FIRE DISTRICT POLICY

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**Number:** 0900.0401.00

**Date:** 2/23/09

**Area:** Operations

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**Subject:** Uniform Apparel

**Approved:**

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### 1.0 General:

It is the intention of the fire district to present a professional image when serving the public. A critical component integral to professional department is a standardized uniform appearance for all fire district personnel who come into contact with the public. The fire district will ensure that the proper components essential to a professional appearance are provided to employees. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure the wearing of those components portrays the proper professional image consistent with the values of our organization.

### 2.0 Purpose:

It is the purpose of this policy to provide standardized direction to all fire district personnel defining the proper uniform apparel to be worn when on-duty with North Whatcom Fire and Rescue. It also is the purpose of this policy to provide all uniformed personnel direction regarding the proper wearing of department uniforms, insignia, and emblems.

### 3.0 Scope:

This policy applies to all fire district members who wear department issued uniforms when representing North Whatcom Fire and Rescue in any capacity.

The goal of this policy is to accommodate a safe performance of duties and responsibilities while portraying a professional image to the public.

### 4.0 Policy

#### 4.1 Definitions:

*Member:* Any individual who is employed by, or serves as a volunteer firefighter of the fire district and officially represents NWFR when performing his/her duties and responsibilities.

*Paid Personnel:* Those members who are identified as full time or part paid employees and who receive regular payment for the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.

*Volunteer Personnel:* Those members who are not identified as employees yet serve the fire district in a volunteer capacity and who are compensated for his/her services using a stipend reimbursement scale.

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*Emergency Response Personnel:* Those members who by their specific job description respond to emergency incidents and/or are otherwise responsible to conform to the Firefighter Safety Standards of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC 296-305).

*Non-emergency Response Personnel:* Those members who by their specific job description do not respond to emergency incidents, but perform administrative and other support functions to the fire district.

### 4.2 Fire District Responsibility

4.2.1 North Whatcom Fire and Rescue shall provide the appropriate uniform attire to qualifying employees/members using the following guidelines:

- Full and part-paid emergency response personnel shall be provided work uniforms appropriate to the task, where all uniforms provided comply with the provisions of the Washington Administrative Code, Part 296-305-02001, Paragraphs 6 sub-paragraphs (a) through (f) and the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1975, 2019 edition.
- Volunteer emergency response personnel who are provided a duty uniform shall be provided the same style work uniform as provided to full paid personnel, and said uniform shall also comply with the provisions of the Washington Administrative Code, Part 296-305-02001, Paragraphs 6 sub-paragraphs (a) through (f) and the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1975, 2019 edition.
- Non-emergency response personnel who are full or part-paid employees shall be provided work attire that is appropriate to their specific work assignment.

4.2.2 North Whatcom Fire and Rescue shall replace any required uniform item that is worn or deemed unserviceable at no cost to the member, provided that replacement is due to normal wear and tear and/or to accidental damage of the item.

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### **4.3 Member Responsibility:**

- 4.3.1 North Whatcom Fire and Rescue members shall wear the appropriate uniform provided at all times when representing the fire district.
- 4.3.2 Full Paid Emergency Response Personnel shall be dressed in the proper uniform at the beginning of their work shift, and shall remain in the proper uniform until directed otherwise by the company officer..
- 4.3.3 Members shall only wear uniform apparel, insignia, pins, or other uniform items that have been approved by the fire district and shall not wear or display uniform items in a manner that is not consistent with this policy.
- 4.3.4 Members shall maintain department issued uniforms and accessories in a serviceable, clean and neat condition at all times.
- 4.3.5 Members shall immediately report any loss, theft or damage (including damage caused by normal wear-and-tear) of issued uniform items or accessories.
- 4.3.6 Members shall reimburse the fire district for damage or loss of any uniform that is caused by negligence or failure to take proper care of the issued items.
- 4.3.7 Members may not carry, wear or store any firearm while on shift, on their person or in any station, or at any time representing NWFR even if licensed under RCW 9.41.

### **4.4 Supervisory Personnel Responsibility:**

- 4.4.1 Supervisors shall monitor the appearance of all assigned personnel and shall ensure that all fire district personnel maintain a professional appearance when representing the fire district.
- 4.4.2 Supervisors shall coordinate the replacement of any damaged or worn uniform or accessory item issued by the fire district.

### **4.5 Uniform Classification and Components:**

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4.5.1 Fire district uniforms for emergency response personnel shall be identified according to the following classes:

- Class A Uniform – normally worn on formal occasions such as awards ceremonies, funerals, or when representing the fire district at a formal function.
- Class B Uniform – the duty work uniform worn when officially representing the fire district at non-formal functions, such as inspections or school programs. The uniform consists of the issued Class B snap up uniform shirt, issued uniform pants with black duty belt, and issued black duty boots.
- Modified Class B Uniform – the normal duty work uniform worn when on duty. Consisting of a NWFR t-shirt and uniform pants, duty belt and black duty boots in place of the standard Class B uniform. .
- Class C Uniform – an optional normal duty work uniform consisting of a polo style shirt worn in place of the normal duty work shirt, issued uniform pant, duty belt and black duty boot.
- Physical Fitness Attire – appropriate attire worn during physical fitness training and not worn when greeting, addressing, or otherwise working with the public.

### 4.6 Proper Wearing of Uniform

4.6.1 The company officer shall designate when and where the proper class of uniform is to be worn on a daily basis. On District wide events the Fire Chief shall have the authority to designate the appropriate uniform for all personnel.

4.6.2 Only uniform apparel issued by the fire district shall be worn when representing the fire district in any official manner and such uniforms shall only be worn as directed by this policy.

4.6.3 The District Fire Chief shall identify the appropriate accessories to be worn on any uniform issued by the fire district and said accessories shall only be worn in the manner described herein. Those items shall be limited to:

- fire district organizational patch

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- medical certification patch
- labor organization patch (represented emergency response personnel only)
- fire district badge
- appropriate rank insignia
- name tag
- special award recognition pins/awards

No other items shall be worn on any fire district issued uniform unless specifically authorized in writing by the District Fire Chief.

- 4.6.4 All members shall wear the appropriate class of uniform when officially representing the fire district, when on duty or while engaged in activities that involve the public.
- 4.6.5 Members of a company level crew shall appear in public wearing the same uniform apparel.
- 4.6.6 The class of uniform identified herein shall be always worn in its entirety, unless authorized by the Chief to vary the components worn.
- 4.6.7 Alterations or changes to the components of a class of uniform shall not be permitted without written permission of the District Fire Chief.
- 4.6.8 Only clean, pressed uniforms shall be worn. Uniforms that are dirty, wrinkled, damaged, showing excessive wear, or faded shall not be worn.
- 4.6.9 The wearing of any fire district issued uniform shall only occur when “officially on duty” or when participating in an official fire district sanctioned event.

#### **4.7 Proper Uniform Classification Apparel:**

- 4.7.1 Class A Uniforms shall consist of the following items:
- Black dress trousers. Women may wear a regulation black skirt in lieu of dress trousers. The skirt will be either a regulation A-line skirt with single center front pleat or a regulation straight line skirt with back overlap slit.
  - Black belt 1 ½” wide, either plain or basket weave design, and with a plain silver or gold buckle depending on rank.

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- Black dress socks (Women wearing a skirt may wear proper colored hose in lieu of socks).
- Black, low-cut Oxford style shoe with a plain toe. Female members may wear authorized black pumps when wearing the optional skirt. Uniform work boots are not permitted.
- White, long sleeved shirt.
- Appropriate rank insignia on shirt collar with the insignia centered on the collar, located  $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the leading edge.
- Name Tag
- Plain black necktie issued by the fire district.
- Black dress coat, with appropriate rank striping and years of service markers on right sleeve. Rank insignia shall be worn on each lapel of the dress coat with the center of the device centered on and one inch above the "V" of the lapel.
- Rank insignia worn on the shirt collar and lapel of the dress coat shall be:
  - Fire Chief: 5 crossed bugles, gold in color
  - Assistant Chief: 4 crossed bugles, gold in color
  - Division Chief: 3 crossed bugles, gold in color
  - Battalion Chief: 2 crossed bugles, gold in color
  - Captain: 2 parallel bugles, silver in color
  - Lieutenant: 1 single bugle, silver in color
- Sleeve striping identifying rank shall include:
  - Fire Chief: five  $\frac{1}{2}$ " gold stripes on each cuff
  - Assistant Chief: four  $\frac{1}{2}$ " gold stripes on each cuff
  - Division/Battalion Chief: three  $\frac{1}{2}$ " gold stripes on each cuff
  - Captain: two  $\frac{1}{2}$ " silver stripes on each cuff
  - Lieutenant: one  $\frac{1}{2}$ " silver stripe on each cuff
  - Firefighter: one  $\frac{1}{2}$ " blue stripe on each cuff
  - Years of Service Markers one marker for each five years of service
- Coat badge appropriate for rank and approved by the Fire Chief shall be worn on the dress coat.

4.7.2 The following are appropriate times when the Class A uniform should be worn:

- When attending formal presentations or events.
- When appearing in court representing NWFR or in other formal proceedings.

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- When attending firefighter funerals or when assigned fire fighter funeral detail. A badge shroud shall be worn, and pallbearers may wear white gloves.
- When Serving as an Honor Guard or color guard
- Other formal occasions as authorized by the District Fire Chief.

NOTE: Members will normally not respond to emergency incidents while wearing the Class A uniform.

4.7.3 Class B Uniforms worn by fire district personnel shall consist of the following items:

4.7.3.1 Chief Officers

- White or dark blue, short or long sleeved, cotton-blend or nomex uniform shirt with badge tabs and epaulettes. The shirt is worn over a plain white or dark blue uniform undershirt.
- NWFR shoulder patch located on both sleeves, centered 1" below the shoulder seam.
- Black necktie with approved tie clasp may be worn with the white long-sleeved shirt only.
- Badge appropriate for rank shall be worn centered above the left pocket.
- Name tag displaying first and last name shall be worn centered above the right breast pocket one-quarter inch above the top of the pocket seam. No nicknames are allowed, however common names are acceptable e.g. Doug instead of Douglas.
- Dark blue Nomex or other duty-related trousers.
- Black duty belt, 1½" wide, either plain or basket weave design, with a plain gold buckle.
- Black shoes or boots that must be plain, smooth black leather. Footwear can have a low, medium, or high top and can be a pull-on style or secured by zippers, laces, or Velcro. Footwear must be securely fastened while worn.
- Uniform collar insignia as defined herein with the collar insignia being ¾" in diameter or have a maximum length of ¾" with insignia being worn on each shirt collar, with the center of the insignia centered 1" from each edge and corner of the collar.
- Appropriate duty jacket depending on weather conditions, dark blue/black in color and reflective to include the NWFR patch on the

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left shoulder, centered 1” below the shoulder seam and the medical certification patch on the right shoulder, centered 1” below the shoulder seam, and a sewn-on name tag displaying the first initial and last name located on the right side.

### 4.7.3.2 Company Level Personnel

- Short or long-sleeved Nomex shirt, dark blue in color with epaulettes and badge tabs. This shirt is worn over a dark blue t-shirt.
- NWFR shoulder patch located on the left the sleeve, centered 1” below the shoulder seam and IAFF Union patch for full paid represented personnel or medical certification patch for volunteer personnel located on the right sleeve centered 1” below the shoulder seam.
- Name tag displaying first initial of first name and last name centered above the right breast pocket one-quarter inch above the top of the pocket seam. Nametag will be either metal or sewn.
- Badge appropriate for rank worn centered above the left pocket.
- Dark blue t-shirt with the NWFR logo on the left chest and “North Whatcom Fire and Rescue” on the back (white silkscreen).
- Black duty belt, 1½” wide, either plain or basket weave design, with a plain silver buckle.
- Black shoes or boots that meet ANSI Z41 toe impact and compression specifications. They must be plain, smooth black leather. Footwear can have a low, medium or high top and can be a pull-on style or secured by zippers, laces, or Velcro. Footwear must be securely fastened while worn.
- Uniform collar insignia with the collar insignia being ¾” in diameter or having a maximum length of ¾”. The insignia shall be worn on each shirt collar, with the center of the insignia centered 1” from each edge and the corner of the collar.
- Dark blue duty sweatshirt with a ¼ length zip with collar and NWFR logo on left chest.
- Appropriate duty Jacket depending on weather conditions, dark blue/black in color and reflective to include the NWFR patch on the left shoulder, centered 1” below the shoulder seam and the IAFF Union patch for full paid represented personnel or the medical certification patch for volunteer personnel located on the right sleeve

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centered 1” below the shoulder seam, and a sewn-on name tag displaying the first initial and last name located on the right side.

- Modified Class B Uniform – the normal duty work uniform worn when on duty. Consisting of a NWFR T-shirt and uniform pants, duty belt and black duty boots in place of the standard Class B uniform.

4.7.4 The Class C Uniform is an optional uniform that may be worn by operational and administrative personnel. Personnel may wear department provided dark navy polo shirts with the department logo embroidered on left chest. Additional items in the Class C Uniform include:

- Dress pant of appropriate color (Administration only)
- Uniform belt
- Appropriate shoes
- Optional baseball cap

#### **4.8 Uniform Maintenance and Appearance**

- 4.8.1 Uniforms shall be worn in their entirety while on duty, at a training event or attending a function representing NWFR.
- 4.8.2 Shirts, including t-shirts, shall be kept tucked in and /or buttoned appropriately. Pants shall be tailored and worn so as not to drag the hem of the pants on the ground.
- 4.8.3 All footwear shall be appropriately secured, clean and polished.
- 4.8.4 No under-clothing shall be visible except for an appropriate t-shirt.
- 4.8.5 Uniforms will only be worn on duty, during incidents, at training or at fire district sanctioned events.
- 4.8.6 Dress shall be neat and professional whenever an individual may be identified as a member of NWFR.

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4.8.7 All uniforms shall appear neat, be wrinkle and stain free, be without visible tears or holes and shall not show signs of fading, abnormal wear or being unserviceable.

4.8.8 All uniform accessories, including insignia, belts, and footwear shall be polished and in good repair.

4.8.9 It shall be each member's responsibility to maintain issued uniform items in good repair and acceptable appearance. Uniforms shall be cleaned and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.

#### **4.9 Uniform Replacement and Return**

4.9.1 All uniform replacement items will be standard department issue from an approved vendor, unless otherwise approved by the Fire Chief.

4.9.2 Individual requests for uniforms, accessories or protective clothing shall be forwarded through the proper chain of command and will be processed in accordance with accepted fire district procedures.

4.9.3 The requestor's Supervisor will verify the need for a replacement item and will coordinate replacement.

4.9.4 When items are replaced, the old item will be returned to the fire district and disposed of appropriately.

4.9.5 Items that are repairable will be repaired and returned either to the member or back into district inventory.

4.9.6 An inventory list of issued uniform items, accessories, and equipment will be maintained in the records management system of the fire district for each member.

4.9.7 When a member leaves NWFR, the member's Supervisor shall verify the return of all issued items.

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